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IX.—On a supposed Mutation between *L* and *U*.

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It is often stated that in French an 'u' has been derived from a Latin *l*, of which supposed examples are cited in 'sâlsus' French *sauce*; 'fâlsus' *faux, fausse*; 'bâlsamum' *baume*, in which the Latin â merely closes to *o*, independently of *l*, as shown in cases where the *l* and orthographic 'u' occur together, as in 'sâl-ix' *saule*; 'sâltus' old Fr. *sault*, modern *saut*. Similarly, Latin *o* closes to French *ou*, as in 'molînus' *moulin*; 'mōrîri' *mourir*; 'mōvêre' *mouvoir*; or Latin *u* remains as French *ou*, as in 'fulgur' *foudre*. The facts remain the same whether the 'au' is regarded as ô, or as representing a diphthongal sound in some of the dialects.

In some localities the 'e' of *beau* is pronounced, leaving *au* as a recession of *u* in 'bēllus,' influenced by the ablative form 'bello,' like the ô of English *cōulter* from Lat. 'cūlter' (*coulter*, knife). We have a like case in Latin -um, ablative -o, in going from 'mantelum' to Fr. *mante-au*; and final -a of 'bētula' (birch) gives ô in French *b..ouleau*, Lat. 'et' being dropt and 'u' (ou) retained. So 'cūltēllus' gives French *cou..te..au* (= *coo-to*); 'aqva' *eau*; 'alter' *autre*; 'altus' *haut*; 'astur' *au..tour*, where Latin *s* is lost, *a* becomes *o* (or perhaps a diphthong in some dialects), and *u* (= *oo*) remains in its usual French orthographi.